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New EXPERIMENTS,  
AND  
Useful Observations  
CONCERNING  
Sea -- Water  
MADE  
F R E S H,

According to the  
PATENTEES INVENTION:

In a Discourse Humbly Dedicated to His  
Majesty the KING of  
GREAT BRITAIN, &c.

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By a Fellow of the *Colledge of Physicians*, and of  
the *Royal-Society*.

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L O N D O N,

Printed by John Harefinch, Anno Dom. 1684.

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AND  
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LONDON

Printed by John Harrison, Anno Domini 1682

TO THE  
KING'S Most Excellent Majesty.

May it please Your Majesty,

**T**HE making *Sea-Water* Fresh, hath of late been much discours'd of, and is of great Consequence, not only with respect to *Merchant-Ships*, but also, as I conceive, to your *Majesties Navy*, and *Garrisons*, and to *Sea-Port Towns* in all parts of the World, where good Water is wanting.

All that is proper to be said upon the Matter, will lye in making good these three *Affertions*.

I. That *Sea-Water* may easily, safely, commodiously, in sufficient Quantities, be made Fresh for all common Uses at Sea.

II. That so done, it is as wholesome to be drunk, and us'd about Dyer, as any other Water now in use at Sea.

III. That being so, the advantages are such as will much more than countervail the charge and trouble about it.

For the Truth of the first, we have the Reputation of the Gentlemen who have your Majesties Patent for it, and their Interest also to assure Us. By an Instrument scarce a Yard over, which may stand under the Deck of any Ship, or very well in the Cook-room, and all Smoak and Fire avoided, they can make about ninety Gallons in twenty four Hours: Which at the largest Allowance, of three Quarts to a Man, being kept at constant working, will serve about a hundred and twenty men, although two Quarts a day, or three Pints, in time of Scarcity, is counted a good Allowance for one man.

We are likewise assured, that it may be done with ease and ordinary attendance: for although the *Sea* be *salter* in some places than in others, yet the Operation is the same; neither is there any difference betwixt that which comes first, and last. And whatever is to be put into the *Engine* with the *Water*, may as easily be done, as *Salt* or *Oat-meal* into *Pottage*: So that one Man may serve both to make the *Drink*, and for other uses of the *Ship*.

By Mr. Boyle we are also assured, *That Sea Water thus made fresh, is as wholesome to be drunk as any Water about the Town, in its best Condition.* And by an Ingenious Physician of the College, a proper comparison hath been made betwixt *This*, and the best *Water*. And so many of the College as were desired, have not doubted to give it under their Hands, *That they were satisfied of the Wholsomeness of this Water.*

Notwithstanding which, to give the World a little more express Proof of the matter, I shall, with Your Majesties leave, undertake the same; which I think I may the more properly do, because I have no share either in the Profit of it, or in the Credit of the Experiment.

Now, all the Signs, which either Physicians, or common Experience, have given of the best *Water*, are these; *viz. Clearness, Thinness, Sweetness, Softness, Lightness, Durableness, and Purity or Simplicity*; with all which good Qualities, if this *Water* stands in the first rank, I suppose no rational Man will further dispute whether it be good, or no.

The *Clearness* hereof, although it may be pretty well observed in a good *Flint-glass*; yet I consider'd, that as there are degrees of Heat and Cold, of which our Bodies being insensible, can only be judg'd of by a *Weather-glass*; so there may be degrees of Perspicuity, which the Eye, unless assisted, will not easily reach; as may appear by this easy Experiment.

If a few drops of *Claret* be put into *Fresh Sea-Water*, (such as is made by the *Patentes*, and with which I made *This*, and all the following Experiments) they will give it a kind of *light Hyacinthine Red*. But if the same quantity of *Claret* be drop'd into

into as much *River-Water*, and that after the *Water* hath stood in a *Cistern* to settle a considerable time, it will look muddy, as if a drop of *Ink* had been put into it; the *Claret* discovering those *Opacous* Parts which before were not easily discern'd.

The same is likewise an Argument of the *Thinness* of this *Water*. As is also the Preparation of it by *Fire*; for the very *Bailing* of *Water*, is one way recommended by *Hyppocrates*, and commonly used for the *Attenuating* of it; that is, the *Separation* of any *Gross* and *Heterogeneous* Parts, which swim therein, and upon *Bailing* use to *subside*: and the greatest part of *Rain-Water*, which is as *thin* as any, is *Distilled* from the *Sea*.

Its *Sweetness* recommends it, both as to the *Smell* and *Taste*; for the best *Water* hath no *scant*, neither hath this any. And so for the *Taste*; 'tis true, a little *Alkaline salt*, in the Opinion of some *Water-Drinkers*, gives a kind of *sweetness* or *savouriness* to *Water*, as *salt* to their *Pottage*; for which cause, I have known them to prefer *Pump-Water* before any other sort. But the best *Water*, and that which is generally, both by *Water-Drinkers*, and others, most esteem'd, is no otherwise *sweet*, than in being very *soft* upon the *Tongue*, and rather *insipid*; and such is this *Water*.

Neither doth it excell in *sweetness* or *softness* to the *Taste* alone, but also to the *Touch*: of which quality, *Dyers* and *Laundresses* (who are very *Critical* at their *Finger-ends*) make the best Judgment in mixing their *Water* with *Soap*. But a different Degree of *heat*, or proportion of *soap*, will alter the case: And therefore, to make the *Tryal* exact, let half a Pint of *Pump-water* be warmed to a convenient degree, and half a *drachm* of *common soap* dissolv'd therein; in doing of which, it will be very difficult to raise a good *Lather*; the *Water* underneath it will look muddy and unequal, as if it were *curdled*; and when the *Lather* falls, it lies on the *Water*, or any thing it is put upon, like *Grease*, yet feels *harsh*.

The same quantity of *Soap* and *River-water*, and the *Water* heated to the same degree, make a high *Lather*, and that in a short time, and the *water* also under it is equal and *clear*.

In all which Respects, this *Fresh Sea-water* doth not only equal that of the *New-River*, or *Thames*, but excells it: For besides, that it is rather *clearer* when the *soap* is dissolv'd, it also makes as strong a *Lather*, in a shorter time, and with less *soap*; insomuch, that the Woman I caus'd to make the Tryals, and compare them, not knowing whence I had any of the *Waters*, ghess'd, that above a pound and a quarter of *Soap* would not go so far with *Thames-water*, as a pound would do with this *Fresh-sea-water*.

Another Circumstance is, That if the *Water* be extraordinary Good, it will make a very good *Lather* without being heated, which this *Water* will also do.

This same *Water* is also as *light* as any common *Water* whatsoever; as may best be prov'd by a *Water-Poise*, which the *Italians* commonly use when they would try the *lightness*, and therein the *goodness* of their *Water*. For this Purpose, I mark'd the Neck of one with several Degrees equally distant, immersed it in the seven following *Waters*; wherein it sunk less or more, according to the *Gravity* or *Lightness* thereof.

In the *Pump-water* in *Chancery-lane*, (a *heavy water*) it hardly dips to the first, or lowermost Degree.

In the *Pump-water* in *Christ's-Hospital*, just to the lowermost.

In the *Conduit-water* in *Cheapside*, to the second, or near it.

In *Thames-water*, *New-River-water*, *Water* distill'd from *Spring-water*, and in *Fresh-sea-water*, to the third, or thereabout. So that it is as *light* as common *Water* distill'd.

Neither is there any *Water* more durable or uncorruptible: for, all Corruption in *Water* sheweth it self one of these four ways; either by some ill *taste* or *smell*, or by becoming *muddy* or *turbid*, or by gathering some *skin* or *bubbles* at the Top, or by letting some *Sedement* fall to the bottom; none of all which happeneth to this *Water*, though some of it hath been kept, both in and out of the *Sun*, for nine Months; and without all doubt, would continue so much longer.



The last mention'd quality of the best *Water*, was, its *Purity*; that is, *Simplicity*, or *Homogeneity* of *Parts*.

I deny not, but rather contend, That there is a certain *Aereal Nitre* incorporated with all *Water*; of a different nature from *Nitre* commonly so call'd, and such as by no means yet known, can be visibly separated from the *Water*: From hence chiefly it is, I conceive, that *Water* obtains its cooling quality; and that when it freezes, it is not because it is then only impregnated with this *Nitre*, but because then the *Air* being surcharg'd, throws off a greater quantity into it: As when *Water* is sweeten'd or Season'd with a little *Sugar*, it doth not follow that there is none in it, because not enough to make it *Candy*. So there is of this invisible *Nitre* in *Water*, always enough to season it, though not to make it *Candy*, or turn to *Ice*.

Now allowing this *Nitre*, that *Water* which in all other respects is the most simple, is also justly to be esteem'd most wholesome, and always hath been so. For as the *Humours* of the *Eye*, which is the *Instrument*, and the *Air* the *Medium*, by which we discern all *Colours*, ought to be themselves perfectly transparent and colourless; so *Water*, which is only a *Vehicle* to our *Food*, should be it self the most simple, and freest from all manner of *Qualities*, besides those proper to it as *Water*. For if it be desired at any time to be imbued with any other *Quality*; it is with respect to some medicinal *Use*, and not common *Dye*.

Now this *Purity*, or *Homogeneity* of *Parts*, doth eminently belong to this *Fresh-sea-water*, as I shall make it appear several ways; and therewithal, shew the Reason of its other good qualities; especially of its *Softness*, *Lightness*, and *Incorruptibility*.

And first, the reason of its *Softness* is its *Purity*; or its being undefiled with any kind of corrosive salt, whether *Alkaline*, *Marine*, or *Acid*.

For upon evaporating of any hard *Pump-water*, most *Spring-waters*, and *River-waters*, in a *Glass Vessel*, or one very well glaz'd; it is evident, that the former contains a considerable quantity of salt: A *Gallon* from the *Pump* in *Chancery-lane*, which

which is the *saltest water* in this *City*, will yield near three *Drachms*; not of an *Aluminous salt*, as is commonly thought, but an *Alkaline*, with the *Taste* and other *Properties* of a *Lixivial salt*.

That *Spring waters*, though they yield more or less of the same *salt*; yet in a far less quantity, and that *River-waters* yield the least of all; Of which three sorts of *Waters*, the first are the *hardest*, the last the *softest* of any in common use; yet excelled by *Fresh Sea-water*, as appears by one of the foregoing *Experiments*.

Neither is there any *Marine-salt* herein; for, whereas half a *Pint* of this *Fresh-sea-water*, or of *River-water*, and half a *Drachm* of common *soap*, will of themselves make a very good *Lather*; if but twelve or thirteen *Grains* of common *salt* be added to the *Water* before the *soap* be dissolv'd therein, it will curdle, and the *Lather* fall like *Grease* upon it, as if it were some *harsh Pump-water*.

Nor yet any *Acid*; for, if you put but seven or eight drops of *Oyl of Vitriol* into half a *Pint* of *River-water*, though you increase the former quantity of *soap*, yet it will never make any *Lather* at all.

Or to come yet nearer; Should any suspect that some kind of *Spirit of Salt* may come off with the *Water*; if but seven or eight drops of *Spirit of Salt* be put to half a *Pint* of *River-water*, it will, in the same manner, hinder it from making any *Lather*. Nay, if but two or three drops be put into it, they will have the same effect.

So the reason why *Fresh-sea-water*, as prepar'd by the *Patentees*, is so extream soft, is its *purity*, or freedom from all manner of *Salts*, save only that *Aerial Nitre* which is common to all *Water*, and chiefly contributes to its *cooling* quality.

Or if any one should be so pertinacious, as to say, that yet there may be one *Grain*, or part of a *Grain* of *Salt*, or one drop or part of a drop of *Spirit of Salt*; should thus much be granted, then in the same quantity of *Thames-water*, there is as much, or more; this being a *softer matter* than even *Thames-water* it self.



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The *purity* of this *Water* is also argu'd from its *lightness*. The perfect Dissolution of any *Salt*, or *Earth*, in *Water*, in never so small a quantity, adding weight to it. So, for Example, if half a *drachm* of common *salt* be dissolv'd in a Pint of *River-water*, the *Water-poise* will dip no lower into it than into any *harsh Pump-water*. So that in a Pint of such *Water*, there is about half a *drachm* of *Salt* and *Limy-Earth*, more than in *River-water*: for, although such *Water* be as clear or transparent as any *distill'd Water*, yet in the *Evaporation*, some portion of *Earth* is always precipitated together with the *salt*.

So likewise, if half a *drachm* of *Oyl of Vitriol*, or *Spirit of Salt*, be put to a Pint of *River-water*, the *Water-poise* will dip therein but to the same Degree as if the same quantity of *salt* had been put into it.

Since therefore the *Gravity* or *Lightness* of *Water* dependeth upon the Dissolution of more or fewer *Salt*, *Acid*, or *Earthy* Parts therein: And that *Fresh-sea-water* is rather lighter than *River-water*, and as light as any common *Water* distill'd, as hath before been prov'd: The one is as pure and free from all kind of *Salt*, *Acid*, or *Earthy* Parts, as the other.

From whence, and from its being void of any taste or smell, 'tis also easie to conclude, how it is so permanent and incorruptible; for in this Case, there can be no *Corruption* without *Fermentation*, nor any *Fermentation* where there is no *Sulphur*, nor any other fermenting Principles to be any way discover'd: So that as the simplicity of this *Water* is the reason of its Duration; so this, with the Premises, an evident Proof of its *purity* and *simplicity*; which still may be further confirm'd by the following Experiments.

Let about half an Ounce of *Syrup of Violets* be dissolv'd in half a Pint of some *harsh Pump-water*; in a short time, the *Water* turns the *Syrup* to a muddy green Colour: This I have known to happen to some *Apothecaries*, as much to their loss, as their wonder, from whence it should proceed. But the Reason was, though they took sufficient Care in picking their *Violets*, yet not in the choice of their *Water*.

Put a few Drops of *Oyl of Vitriol*, or *Spirit of Salt*, to the same quantity of *River-water*, and then let the same proportion of *Syrup of Violets* be dissolv'd therein, and it presently turns *Purple*.

But if the *Syrup* be dissolved in *River-water* alone, it turns neither *green*, nor *purple*, but holds its *blew Colour* perfect; and so it doth the like if it be dissolv'd in *Fresh-sea-water*.

Observing this, I proceeded to make the like Experiment with *Claret-wine*, which I mixed with several sorts of *Water* in some good quantity, as I did the *syrup*; but without any discernable difference between them.

But, considering that the colour of *Claret* being very full and strong, might require a much greater proportion of *Water* to over-rule it; I put three Spoonfuls of *Pump-water* into a *Flint Glass*, and drop'd into it not above seven or eight Drops of *Claret*, which being well mix'd, I perceiv'd, that in a little time after, the *Colour*, instead of being changed, was wholly vanish'd, and the *Water* become as clear as before the *Claret* was drop'd into it. The *Alkaline Parts* in this *Water*, destroying the *Acid*, and therewith the colour of the *Claret*.

The same number of Drops, being mix'd with the same quantity of *Lambs-Conduit-water*, in a *Glass* of the like Metal, Bigness, and Shape, the colour, in a short time, did almost, but not wholly, vanish.

Mix'd in like manner with *River-water*, it gives a few *Permanent Rays* of *Red*, but *muddy*; as was before observ'd, and is here again to the present purpose.

But being mixed in the same Proportion, and *Glass*, with *River-water* distill'd, gives it a *light, clear, and permanent hyacinthine Red*.

And the same curious and durable *Red* it likewise imparts to *Fresh-sea-water*.

From whence, and all that hath been said before, it appears, To have the clearness and durability of *Spring-water*; the lightness or softness of *Rain* or *River-water*, the sweetness and simplicity of that which is distill'd: and in a word, all the good

Quali-

Qualities of the best *Water*, without any bad one: Which may serve to satisfy any reasonable Man, not only to make Tryal of it, but also to prefer it before any other now in use at Sea.

Yet because Men will hardly be brought to leave a known Road, though a bad one, for a better unknown, till they see some Body go before them; therefore, to discharge all manner of Scruple, I must not omit to add, that there are several Persons of Quality, and others, who have Drunk often and liberally of this *Water*; and though not much used to drink *Water*, yet have receiv'd no Prejudice thereby. And amongst them, some *Water-Drinkers*; whom I take to be the most proper Judges in the Case, and who give the Character of it, To be very *wholsome*; and that it will quench the *Thirst*, as well as any other ordinary *Water*.

The Feazibleness of making sufficient quantities of *Sea-water Fresh*, and the Wholsomness thereof, being granted; The Advantages which will arise from the use of it at Sea, are very obvious; with respect both to *Profit* and *Health*.

And first, as to *Profit*. Suppose the Voyage to be made to *Surrat*; for which, one Butt of *Water*, for *Drink* alone, is the ordinary Allowance for one Man. The Quantity being always laid in, not only according to the length of this or any other Voyage, but also for a Reserve in case of a Calm; which, if it happen not, they have commonly more than enough. So that if we suppose a hundred Men to be in the Ship, they will require so many Butts for *Drink*. Whereas, if there be no *Water* laid in, but only an *Instrument* to make it, as there is need, The *Coals* to work it a day and half, that is, to make about a Butt (126 Gallons) of *Fresh-water*, may be allowed to be something more than a *Busbel*, which will be the most; or for a hundred Butts, to be about a hundred and ten *Busbels*. So that one Butt containing fifteen *Busbels*, a hundred and five *Busbels* will lie in the room of seven Butts. By which means, about thirteen parts of fourteen now taken up for *Water*, will be gain'd for *Stowage*; saving that there must be some few

Cask for receiving the *Water* as it is wrought off from the *Engine*. And the like Computation, or near it, may be made with respect to any other *Fuel*; which may also be used as well as *Coal*. Besides which, the saving the Charge of the *Butts*, will be very considerable; the Price of a *Butt* being twenty Shillings, being bound with *Iron*.

Besides which, there are other Particulars, relating to *Profit*, and the preventing of *Damages* both at *Sea*, and in *Sea-Port Towns*; upon which, the Honourable Mr. *Fitz-Gerald*, in his late Book, doth very pertinently insist.

I shall therefore conclude with the second great Advantage which will hence arise; and that is, in point of *Health*. 'Tis true, that *Thames-water*, when first laid in, hath the Repute of no *Unwholsome Drink*. And generally, though not always, good Care is taken in laying it in, both at the best time, which is at half Ebb: and in case of great *Tides*, above the *Bridge*, sometimes as high as *Chelsey*. And though it *Ferments* and *Stinks* in the *Voyage*, yet grows sweet again: and, as they say, doth not *stink* all at one time.

Notwithstanding which, there are very few, who would choose a *Suspicious Water*, that may have *Spring-water*, if they will, or that which is as good; or better, if it be true, which some say, That in a large *Voyage*, even some *Spring-waters* will *ferment* a little. For the mixing with *Wine*, or any other use, it would be no small Pleasure to the *Captain* of a Ship, to be sure of that which is the best. And it is as a Rule among the *Sea-men*, That good *Water* shall be valued, and go as far as *Brandy*, when they club together for a Bowl of *Punch*.

In point of *Health*; peradventure, while the *Thames-water* is in the height of its Ferment, even the *Seamen* may forbear to drink it. Yet we have no Reason but to believe, when that is over, before the *Water* be thoroughly recover'd, it often goes down well enough with them; who living in so thick and moist an *Air*, and having their *Mouths* always fir'd with *salt Meats*, cannot be very Critical either in their *Taste* or *Smell*. So that though the *Scent* and *Taste* of the *Water*, with respect



to the Sea-men, is not much to be regarded, yet their constant drinking of a fermenting Liquor, though but for some days, may be of ill consequence, and for that time, the more incline them to *Galentures* and other *Fevers*; especially near the *Line*, where they are more subject to them, and the *Water* to its highest *Ferment*. For the maintaining whereof, there is a considerable stock of *Matter* in the *Water*, how simple soever it may seem to be. Inſomuch, that after any long *Voyage*, it will *Burn*, or give a *Flash*. Whereas *Fresh Sea-water*, being free from all manner of *Inflammatory* and *Fermenting Principles*; it can no way conduce to the production of the fore-mention'd *Diseases*, but will rather prevent them.

But ſuppoſing *Thames-water* were always wholeſom; yet the *Water*, in many other places, where *Ships* are often forc'd to take it in, is found to be very bad, and to make the Men ſick. An *Engliſh Ship*, the *Faulkon*, in a late *Voyage* to *Surat*, being upon the *Coaſt* of *Malabar*, was there forced to take in *Water*; of which, the Men who drank, were taken with *Fluxes* and *Fevers* of that ill nature, that of about eighty five in the *Ship*, thirteen, or near one ſixth part, died in a ſhort time, and ſome languish'd long under dangerous *Diſtempers*.

And ſometimes *Ships* are brought to that want of *Water*, as neither to have good nor bad; as in a long *Calm*: Which though it doth not often continue ſo long as to *Kill* the Men; yet, beſides the Anguiſh of *Thirſt*, it ſometimes makes way for divers *Diseases*, as a *Surfeit*, *Dysenteries*, or *Cholick*, upon the firſt Immoderate Drinking.

Sometimes alſo, it is an occaſion of great Danger both to Men and *Ship*. Not long ſince, a *Ship* went to Sea, betwixt *Cheſter* and *Dublin*, pretty well provided with *Water*: But meeting with a *Calm* of ſome Days, the *Paſſengers* were forc'd to Row ſeveral Leagues to the *Welſh Shore*; in which time, if a *Storm* had happen'd, the *Paſſengers* had been loſt in the *Boat*, and the *Ship*, in all likelihood, had been loſt for want of the *Hands* that were made uſe of in the *Boat*.

Nay,

Nay, it hath been known, that a whole Ship of Men have perish'd for want of *Water*. About five years since one came in laden with *Tobacco* from *Virginia*, in which all the *Passengers* were found dead; having declar'd in a Writing which they had nail'd upon the *Mast*, *That they had Perish'd for want of Water*. All which Mischiefs will be avoided by the constant Supply of *Fresh Sea-water*.

And not only in point of *Drink*, but also in *Meat*; most of which now Eaten is extream salt. For which, all the Care they have at *Sea*, is to soak it before it is Boil'd; not in *fresh-water*, but in *salt*. For if they should use *fresh-water*, they must lay in near double the quantity, the *Meat* being commonly shifted once in four hours, for three or four times. They say, indeed, that the soaking of it in *salt-water*, fetcheth out the *Salt* better than in *fresh*. And for the first or second soaking, I believe it may; yet also, that a *soak* or two in *fresh-water* afterwards, will do best: Which, to keep the *Meat* from *stinking*, as at that time it is apt to do, may be done so much the sooner.

But many times the Sea-men are put to such straits, as not only to *soak*, but also to *boil* their *Meat* in *salt-water*. Which instead of taking any *salt* out of it, doth rather add to it; because the *boiling* of the *sea-water* makes it to become *salter*.

Now from such *Diet* as this, what can be expected, but besides the highest *Scurveys*, a Foundation also for *Dropsies* and divers other *Diseases*, of which the *Patients* either dye quickly, or are hereby so far weakned, as with respect to the Publick, to be worse than dead: For a Man that is dead, is but one Man lost; but one that cannot work, is not only lost himself, but also spends upon the Labours of another. All which Mischiefs will be very much prevented, by having of *fresh-water* enough for all Uses at hand.

And this, not only by emendation of bad *Meat*, but moreover in altering the very way of *Diet*: for where there is fresh *Water*, good *Victuals* may be made at any time without *Flesh*. This, with *Bisquet*, *Wheat*, or *Rice*, and a little *Sugar*, or *Butter*, will make very good Food.

I have thus comprized all that is necessary to be said upon this matter, in as few Words as I could, that I might not seem to mispend those precious Minutes whereof your Majesty hath so few to spare : nor should I have presumed to have intrench'd on them at all, had not your Majesty already judg'd this Subject worthy your Royal Consideration, for the great Usefulness it may be of to Your *Fort*s on *Land*, and Your moving *Castles* in the Sea, where also You are *Sovereign* ; and the Advantage it must certainly bring to *Navigation*, that great *Medium* that Unites the far distant Parts of your Empire, and makes the whole World in a manner pay Tribute to the Throne of *Great Britain*. Those that see the Wonders of God in the *Deep*, when they find Relief in a Necessity, by which they must have perish'd without this Art ; will praise your Majesty's Goodness and Care, not only of your own People, but of all Mankind, and will justly account it a Miracle, that you have rais'd a never-failing *Spring* of *Fresh-Waters* in the midst of the *Ocean*.

F I N I S.